

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alex L. Hayes, October 20, 1876

Hayes Gray, drawer 19 draft copy Boston University, Boston, Oct. 20th, 1876. My dear Sir,

It did not require your kind note of the 19th ult. — to convince me that I had done you an injustice.

I was made suspicious of Mr. Gray — by the underhand inspection of my instruments on several occasions by persons who refused to give their names — for I was unaware at that time that there were others in America besides Mr. Gray who might be supposed to be interested in my experiments. These secret inspections annoyed me so much as to cause me to change my address — and to come to Boston to live in the same building with my instruments. I naturally therefore felt very bitterly toward Mr. Gray and you must pardon me for having included his attorney in my ungenerous thoughts. I have long since discovered — through Mr. Hubbard's family — that you are far too high-minded to have taken advantage of any information you might have obtained concerning my inventions and I am glad that your letter gives me the opportunity of saying so now. Thinking that Mr. Adams might inadvertently have alluded to the nature of my application — namely — “The multiple transmission of telegraphic messages” — & furthermore having been informed by some person whose name I cannot recall that you were the author of the Article in the Commonwealth — and in addition being suspicious of Mr. Gray's good faith & that of all associated with him — I allowed my suspicions to gain ground to such an extent that — when I found no mention of “Multiple Telegraphy” in Mr. Gray's first English patent I felt so absolutely sure that something underhand had been going on — that I determined to include some reference to this in my Preliminary Statement for the purpose of having the matter investigated. (I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gray in Phila, and our conversation there satisfied me that he was an honorable man & an independent

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inventor — & that my suspicions were unfounded. So far as Mr. Gray & I are concerned personally I believe I am right in saying that there are no unpleasant feelings between us, & that we would rather unite our interests than be placed in opposition to one another. We both however have others associated with us pecuniarily interested — & it rests with them whether we shall assume a friendly or an antagonistic attitude towards one another. I have done all that I intend to do in the matter personally — & if any amalgamation of interests is to take place — the initiative must be taken by our business partners. I trust that Mr. Gray & I may always retain whatever kind feelings we may have towards each other now & I may say for myself that I am sorry that fate compels me to be in opposition to him.)

I beg to forward a pamphlet embodying the chief results of my researchs in Telephony.

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If you would like to see my apparatus — & hear articulation through a telegraph wire — I shall be glad to give you the opportunity.

Yours sincerely, A.G.B. Alex. L. Hayes, 17 Pemberton Sqr.